

Georgia Department of Natural Resources **Environmental Protection Division**

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Georgia To Evaluate Clean Power Plan Rule

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is evaluating a new federally-mandated rule to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired and gas-fired power plants. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the final version of the Clean Power Plan (CPP) rule on August 3, 2015. The CPP gives Georgia until 2030 to reach a rate of 1049 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour. Georgia's 2012 baseline rate is 1,598 pounds of carbon dioxide per mega-watt hour.

"While we are going to need time to fully assess all the aspects of the final rule, I want to ensure that Georgians continue to have access to affordable, reliable electricity," said Governor Nathan Deal. "I have instructed Director Turner and the Environmental Protection Division to work with our state's public utilities, state governmental entities and other stakeholders to develop the best approach to this rule for Georgia."

During the comment period, Georgia and other states expressed concerns that the proposed rule unfairly penalizes states that took early action to reduce CO2 emissions. Of particular concern for Georgia was the failure to recognize significant investments in Plant Vogtle Nuclear Units 3 and 4. The treatment of under-construction nuclear in the proposed rule would have resulted in a state goal that was one of the most stringent in the nation. An initial review of the final rule indicates that this significant issue has been addressed.

"I am pleased to see that the final rule does not penalize the foresight of the energy sector and the Public Service Commission in Georgia for investing in and building new nuclear generation capacity," said Director Turner. "To do so would have sent exactly the wrong message to states and utilities that have proactively planned for and developed a diverse energy portfolio."

Over the next year, EPD will work with stakeholders to identify the most efficient way to achieve the required reductions while minimizing impacts to ratepayers as much as possible. The rule gives states one year to develop an initial plan to meet the CPP requirements with an additional two- year period for final rule adoption.

Developing that plan will require close coordination with two other state agencies: the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) as well as representatives from other public utilities. EPD has already shared information with PSC and GEFA staff and has met with various stakeholders including electric utilities, electric membership cooperatives, municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

The state plan will likely require changes to the Georgia Rules for Air Quality Control. The Board of Natural Resources would be asked to adopt those changes prior to EPD's submitting of the state plan to the EPA.

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